2 Project Description

No-Action Scenario

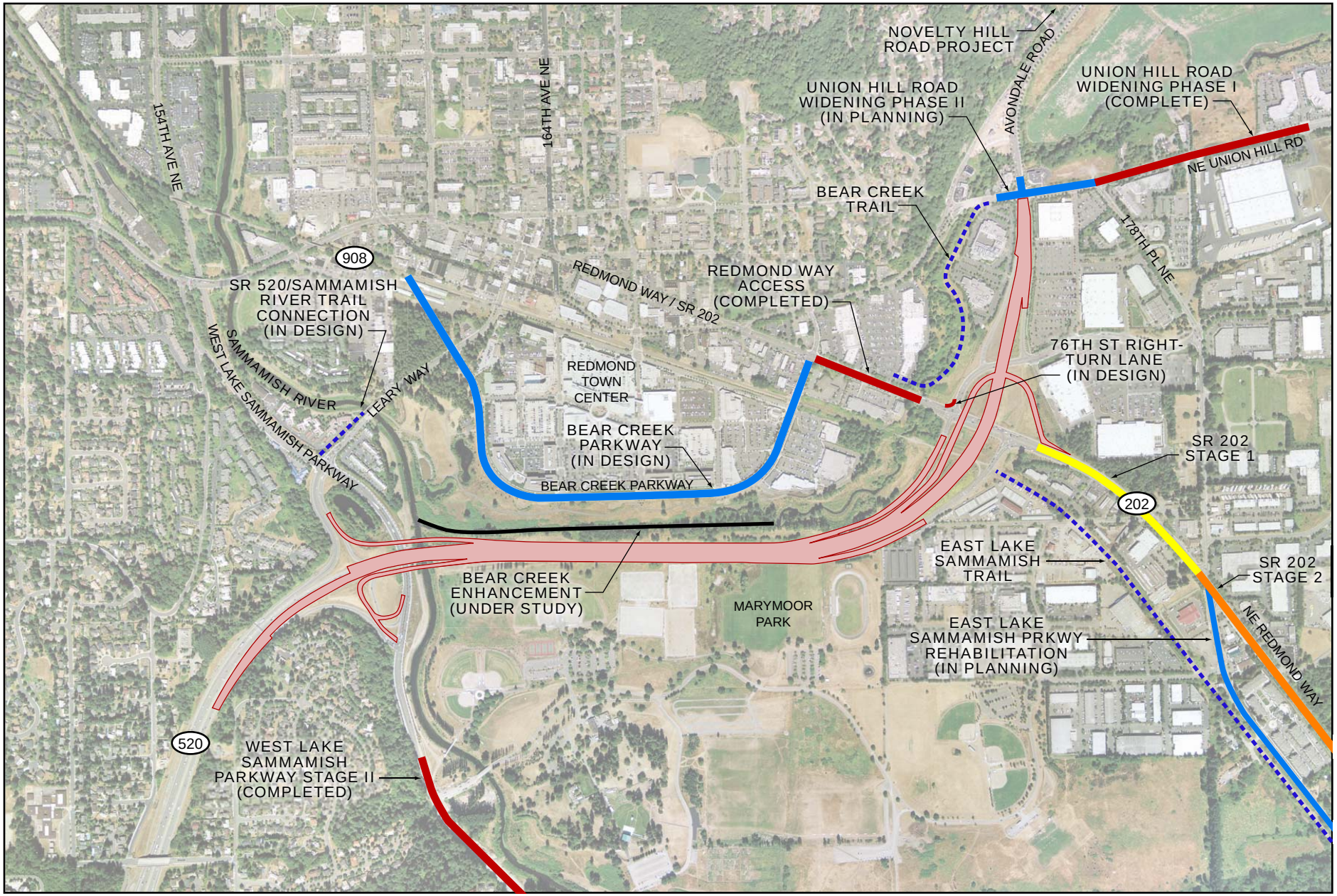
While the original 1992 EIS examined a range of alternatives—including the No-Action Alternative consistent with SEPA—the No-Action Alternative was not chosen as the Preferred Alternative because it would not have met the need to provide improved capacity and reduce accidents in the SR 520 corridor through Redmond. This SEPA Addendum only addresses the third phase of the selected alternative, which involves constructing roadway improvements and associated mitigation. The project is fully funded for construction and will be built. Some of the analyses preformed for this last phase of the project improvements discuss a No-Action Scenario to provide useful information on environmental conditions with and without the project's implementation. For those elements, the No-Action Scenario describes future environmental and traffic conditions in the study area if the project were not built. As such, it provides a baseline to measure the effects (both positive and negative) that the project's construction and operation would have. Figure 2-1 shows surrounding projects recently completed or planned that would still occur under the No-Action Scenario:

- East Lake Sammamish Parkway Rehabilitation
- Novelty Hill Road Project
- Union Hill Road Widening, Phase II
- Bear Creek Trail (continued development)
- SR 202: Stage 2
- Bear Creek Parkway Improvements
- SR 520/Sammamish River Trail Connection

Under the No-Action Scenario, SR 520 would remain as it is today with two general purpose lanes in each direction. Ongoing WSDOT roadway maintenance would continue, and minor safety improvements could occur. The current alignment and lane configuration along the SR 520 mainline would remain unchanged, and the intersections of SR 520 with West Lake Sammamish Parkway and SR 202 would continue to operate as they do today.

The Project Improvements

Project improvements incorporate Stage Three of the Preferred Alternative presented in the 1992 Final EIS and described in Chapter 1. Figure 2-2 illustrates the improvement project's major elements; these improvements would accomplish the following:



N

0 500 1,000

Approximate Scale in Feet

Project Footprint (Edge of Pavement)

FIGURE 2-1

Other Projects in the Study Area

SR 520/West Lake Sammamish Parkway to SR 202

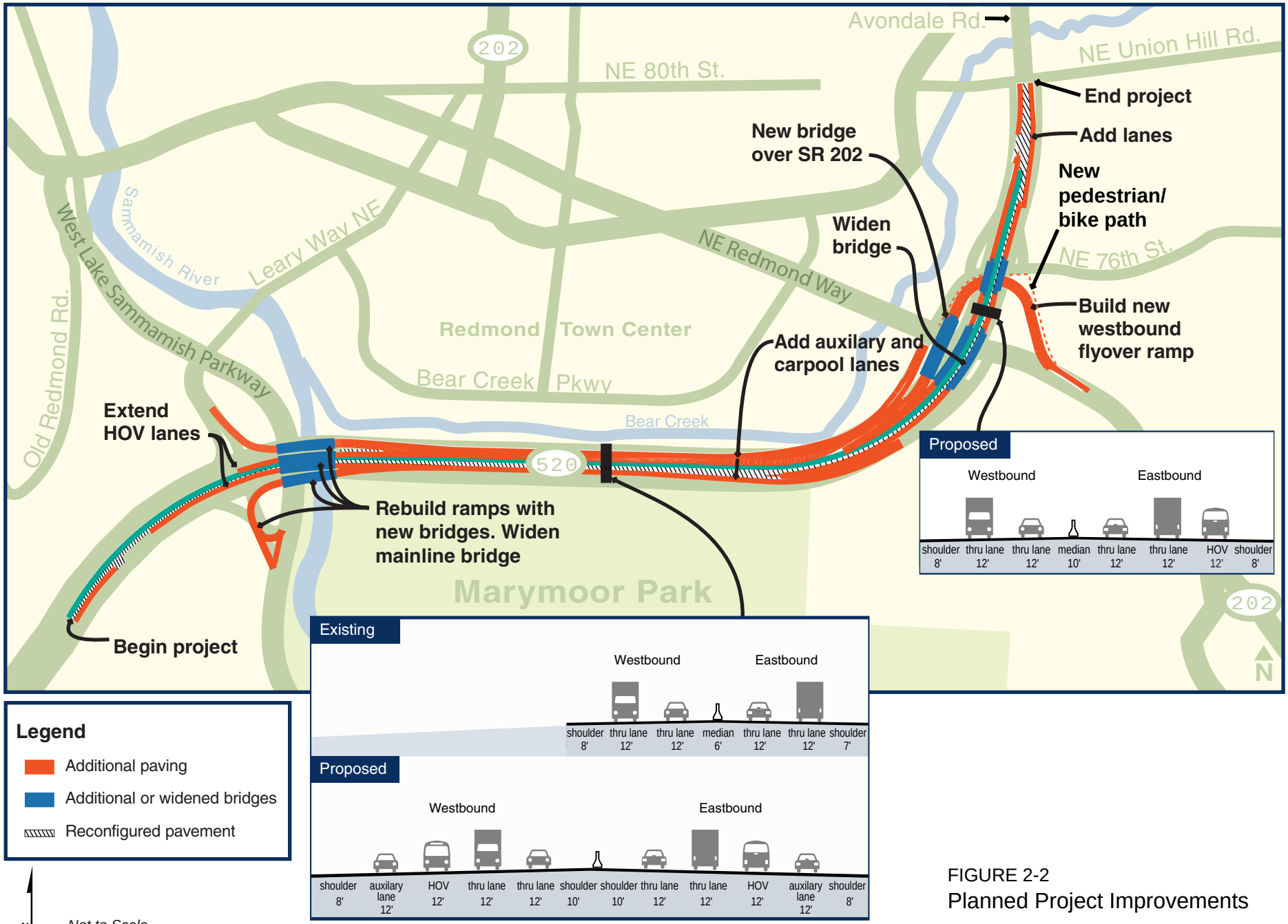


FIGURE 2-2
Planned Project Improvements
SR 520/West Lake Sammamish Parkway to SR 202

- Add an HOV lane and auxiliary lane in each direction of SR 520 between the West Lake Sammamish Parkway and SR 202 interchange areas. Additional and widened bridges would allow additional SR 520 traffic lanes to access the NE Union Hill Road intersection, eliminating the current single-lane bottlenecks in each direction at SR 202. The eastbound HOV lane would continue eastward through the SR 520 and SR 202 interchange to provide access to the intersection. Further, existing eastbound West Lake Sammamish Parkway, State Route 202, and NE 76th Street bridges would be widened to accommodate the new lanes.

- Construct a new flyover ramp connection from northbound SR 202 to westbound SR 520. The flyover would replace the westbound left-turn lanes on SR 202 at NE 76th Street, eliminating left turns from SR 202 onto SR 520. The two-lane flyover would have one lane designated for HOVs; the general-purpose lane would be metered. A bicycle and pedestrian pathway would be constructed at grade adjacent to, but separate from, the SR 202 loop ramp. The path would diverge from the ramp alignment and connect with the sidewalk along the NE 76th Street, and the sidewalk would continue to the intersection at SR 202. Figure 2-3 presents a photo-simulation of this ramp.

- Complete improvements to the West Lake Sammamish Parkway interchange. This interchange would be upgraded with new ramp bridges over the Sammamish River and West Lake Sammamish Parkway.

Similar to the No-Action Scenario, the project assumes all local and regional improvements shown in Figure 2-1. Funding for the project has been provided by the 2003 Legislative Transportation Funding Package ("Nickel Funding Package").

The project would be constructed in two separate phases: Phase 1 and Phase 2. Phase 1, also called the "early stage," would include constructing the new flyover ramp from northbound SR 202 to westbound SR 520 (see Figure 2-4); this phase also would construct the bicycle and pedestrian improvements adjacent to the flyover ramp. Phase 1 construction is expected to begin in 2007 and would be open to traffic by the end of 2007. Phase 2 would include the remaining improvements and is expected to begin construction in 2009 and reach completion in 2011. Advancing construction of the flyover ramp would reduce some of the most severe traffic congestion much sooner than originally planned. Table 2-1 presents some differences between the current project description and the project described in the 1992 Final EIS.

TABLE 2-1
Changes in Project Description

Feature Changed	Description of Change	Reason for Change
Design Year	The 1992 Final EIS assumed a design year of 2010; This SEPA Addendum assumes an opening year of 2010 and a future design year of 2030.	Lapsed time since original design.
HOV Lane	The 1992 Final EIS analyzed an HOV lane on SR 520 between West Lake Sammamish Parkway and SR 202, with no HOV lane between SR 202 and NE Union Hill Road. The updated project description proposes to extend the eastbound HOV lane beyond the SR 202 interchange (Year 2030).	Extension of the eastbound HOV lane allows the HOV traffic to bypass congestion related to the SR 202 interchange.

TABLE 2-1
Changes in Project Description

Feature Changed	Description of Change	Reason for Change
Lane Placement	WSDOT's long-range HOV system plan recommends placing HOV lanes on the inside lane of the corridor; currently, the SR 520 HOV lanes are located on the outside. The 1992 Final EIS did not specify HOV lane placement. The opening year (2010) would likely contain outside HOV lanes, and the 2030 design year would contain inside HOV lanes.	Another future project along the SR 520 corridor (outside of this project's study area) would likely be the catalyst for transitioning the HOV lanes from the outside to the inside.
HOV Designation Change from 2+ to 3+	The HOV designation refers to the number of people required to be in a vehicle for it to qualify as an HOV and travel legally in the HOV lane. All scenarios analyzed in the 1992 Final EIS included 2+ occupancy for HOV lanes. In this updated project description, traffic forecasts for 2030 assume that the HOV lanes would operate under 3+, rather than 2+, conditions.	To maintain adequate travel times on the HOV lanes, traffic volume forecasts indicate that by the year 2030 the designation should be changed to 3+ to preserve HOV travel times. This assumption is also consistent with what the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project study assumed for HOV designation.

EIS Environmental Impact Study
HOV High Occupancy Vehicle
SEPA State Environmental Policy Act
SR State Route
WSDOT Washington State Department of Transportation

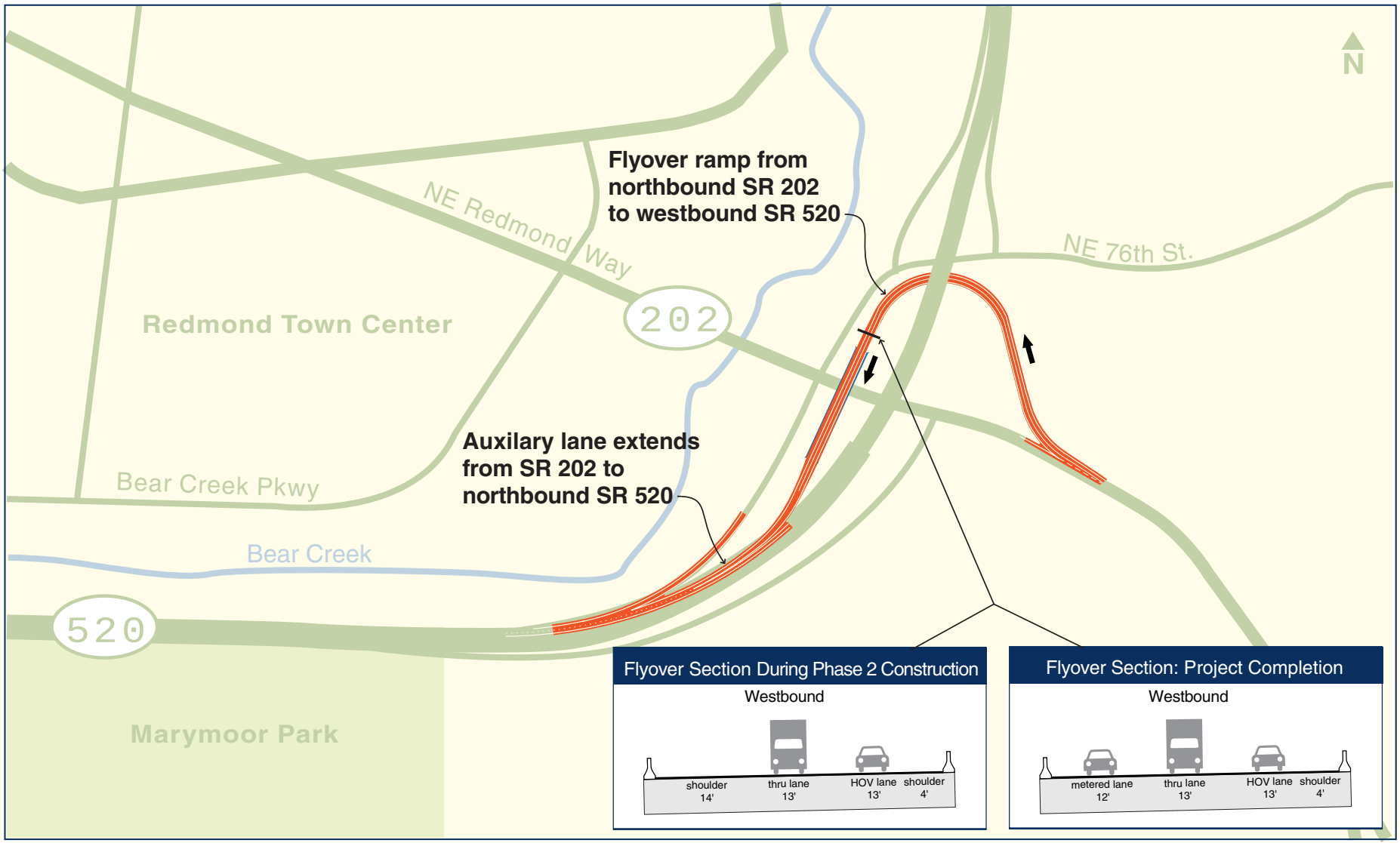
Proposed

Existing

Note: Subject to change.

FIGURE 2-3
Westbound Flyover Ramp
(Photo Simulation Looking South)

SR 520/West Lake Sammamish Parkway to SR 202



N

Not to Scale

FIGURE 2-4
Planned Flyover Ramp
SR 520/West Lake Sammamish Parkway to SR 202